

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 1, after the title, please insert the following new paragraph as follows:

This application is a National Stage Application of PCT/JP2004/017586, filed November 26, 2004.

Please amend paragraph [0051] as follows:

[0051] Further, a compound that inhibits the oligomerization of procaspase-1 caused by NOD2 can be identified by selecting the conditions that allow for the oligomerization of procaspase-1 by NOD2, contacting a test compound with NOD2 and/or procaspase-1 under the conditions, employing a system that uses a signal and/or a marker capable of detecting the oligomerization of procaspase-1 caused by NOD2, and then detecting the presence, the absence, or the change of the signal and/or the marker. For example, a compound that inhibits the oligomerization of procaspase-1 caused by NOD2 can be identified by using an assay system, such as shown in Example 3, which uses a cell co-expressing NOD2 gene with procaspase-1 gene to determine the oligomerization of easpase-1 procaspase-1 in the cell, as shown in Example 3.